

COMMUNITY BASED CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT
OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES IN ZAMBIA :
THE ADMADE EXPERIENCE

by

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INTRODUCTION

The colonisation of the then Northern Rhodesia by Great Britain in the 1890's signalled the beginning of an era during which wildlife proprietorship, usurped from the hands of the Chiefs and tribes of the land, became state property. This in turn marked the beginning of a long story of hostility, resentment and destruction both inside and outside protected areas (Mwenya and Lewis 1990). What was more distressing to the local communities sharing their lands with wildlife was the perpetuation of an authoritarian colonial system under the post-independence government.

The local villager could not understand why his own government allowed rich white men from abroad to butcher anything that walked the land while they mutilated him for trapping a duiker which he desperately needed for the pot. Because he was obliged to feed himself and his family, the villager preferred to take the risk. Meanwhile, the men from town entered the scene with

their promises, their bags of mealie-meal, salt and automatic weapons. The alliance was inevitable and a state machinery starved of cash, men and morale was left wondering where it had gone wrong. But when 95% of the black rhinos and over 50% of the elephant population were decimated in just under 10 years, something had to be done.

From under the rubble of destruction, an idea was conceived. The result of its long gestation period in the Luangwa Valley gave birth to a community-based conservation and management programme popularly known as ADMADE in Zambia (Mwenya et al, 1988; Mwenya and Lewis 1990). Admade is an acronym made up from the first two letters of the Administrative Management Design for Game Management Areas (G.M.A.s). Among other things, Admade seeks to promote conservation and sustainable utilization of wildlife resources by involving the participation of the local resident communities in the decision making process and sharing with them the benefits accruing from the utilisation of wildlife existing on their traditional lands. Hopefully, this will improve the custodians' standard of living and their attitudes towards conservation while in the long term reducing the cost of conservation. Today, after only 2 years, Admade incorporates 25 traditional chief's areas covering a total of 74,100 km² or 10% of Zambia's total land surface (Mwenya and Lewis 1990).

Part of the success is owed to the timely establishment of the Wildlife Conservation Revolving Fund which handles the collection

and disbursement of funds generated from the utilisation of wildlife. The incomes are divided in four ways:

1. 40% is set aside for wildlife management costs in the unit, almost half of which caters for salaries of the local village scouts.
2. 35% is used for community development projects by the local community.
3. 15% is reserved for the management of the national park adjacent to the unit.
4. 10% goes to the Ministry of Tourism for the promotion of Tourism.

At the National level, Admado is administered by the Department of Wildlife and through its parastatal wing, the Wildlife Conservation Revolving Fund. A Directorate comprising various senior Wildlife Officers at the Departmental Headquarters acts as the steering arm of the programme.

However, the implementation of Admado has not been without its share of problems. In this review, we shall examine some of the ingredients of the programmes' success and the bottlenecks that are likely to delay its weaning.

Administrative Organisation

The foundation of Admado is built upon the Wildlife Management Authority (W.M.A.) which is the supreme governing body for each

Wildlife Management Unit with membership drawn from within the district of the unit. The members, selected by virtue of their office or position reflect a blending of the local traditional leadership, government and the local district political leadership. Also represented is the member of parliament for the area, the managing director of the Safari company hunting in the unit and any other person(s) the W.M.A. wishes to invite. The authority is chaired by the local district governor while the secretariat is provided by the resident Wildlife Warden's office.

Among other things, the authority is charged with the task of initiating and directing all conservation and management activities within the unit. It also ensures that 40% of all the revenues generated from safari concession fees within the unit are committed to the management costs while 35% is used by the local people on community development projects. The latter amount is divided amongst the chiefs whose areas fall within the unit. The precise form of community projects is debated at the Wildlife Management Sub-Authority for which there is one per Chiefdom represented at the W.M.A.. Membership on the sub-authority includes the local headmen, local political figures, teachers and other influential people in the chiefdom. The sub-authority also plays its part in facilitating the implementation of any plans approved by the main authority.

The responsibility for the implementation of unit plans fall on the Unit Leader, a trained wildlife officer. The Unit Leader

prepares an annual budget for consideration by the authority. In his task, he is assisted by a team of government scouts and some local village scouts who are nominated by their respective chiefs to undergo a four-month training course in law enforcement, wildlife monitoring and public relations.

Despite the broad-based representation at the authority level there has yet been no attempt to involve the local leadership, at the programme's annual planning workshop. The workshop is crucial to the adoption and implementation of plans at the national level and is almost wholly dominated by wildlife personnel. Some have argued for the abandonment of the annual workshop at national level in preference for regional meetings. This would ensure decentralisation of authority but is unlikely to be supported by government on the basis that it is premature to expect the authorities to run as autonomous bodies. The evidence so far, however, tends to support a more regionalised approach recognising the socio-economic and cultural differences between the different groups within the programme.

Political and Legal Consideration

Although the Admade programme has been fully endorsed by the government some feel that there is need to provide legal authority to some of its institutions. Opinions on the issue differ from those who feel that the Authorities will be given ample time to prove their capability. In its present form, the Wildlife Act is vested with the Wildlife department. In fact the

and empowers wildlife units to exercise authority only with regard to the conservation and management of the fauna in the G.M.A. whereas the Wildlife Management Authority has de facto authority over many unit activities including agriculture. But the powers vested in the authority could be seriously challenged on legal grounds though this has not happened before. There is ultimately a need to address this issue in order to avoid potentially serious constraints.

In principle each unit is expected to generate revenue from any sources in order to implement its work programme but most of this actually comes from sport hunting lease and license fees. The development of the hunting industry is therefore of paramount importance to Admade. Unfortunately, political interference in the running of the hunting industry has prevented the full realization of benefits. This has created some friction between the Wildlife department and its local ministerial officials, in turn frustrating some safari operators. Finally, the high turnover rate of government officials has contributed to the lack of continuity in policy matters. This has had adverse impact on the progress of the programme.

Decentralisation of Authority

Overall, the implementation of Admade plans has consistently fallen behind schedule due to the trappings of government bureaucracy. Without the sheer determination and patience of the programme's proponents, orally beyond the call of duty, not much

would have been achieved. Procurement of capital equipment is usually delayed by months and so is the disbursement of funds generated by each unit. This again is a case favouring the decentralisation of authority and resources to the respective authorities.

Lately, however, there have been moves in this general direction with the employment of book-keepers for each authority and the opening up of bank accounts in the district to facilitate speedy implementation of plans. But most unit leaders still have to travel long distances in order to collect salary cheques and procure supplies for their scouts from the Almada headquarters. This practice has not augured well for the morale of field officers. Those who feel that it is premature to decentralise all authority funds have emphasised the need for tight accountability of funds by the authorities for which the record has not been too impressive so far. A compromise was struck at the last planning workshop where it was resolved that funds would be released on a quarterly basis but this is simply not enough.

To compound the matter even further, quite a number of units are almost totally inaccessible during the rainy season and for these units, there is an urgent need to stockpile salaries and supplies well in advance.

Manpower Development

So far, the programme has trained more than 250 village scouts from a total of 25 chiefdoms (Lewis 1990). Meanwhile, the government has stepped up the recruitment and training of civil servant scouts some of whom will ultimately end up discharging their duties in the B.M.A.'s alongside the village scouts. In fact, at present, each of the 17 units established under the programme has a combination of both. Unfortunately, in a number of units the two forces have not been coupled well enough to achieve maximum effectiveness. Differences in the approach to training at the different schools and conditions of service may have contributed to the rift that exists. The result has been a lack of control on the use of resources within the unit and inefficiency. Clearly, the unit leader faces the temptation of favouring the village scouts over whom he has almost complete control. But he has only limited control over the activities of the civil servant scouts within his unit.

In recognition of this problem, it was proposed at one of the annual planning workshops (1988) that the other officers not directly employed under the programme be fully informed and involved in unit activities. This has helped to an extent although there are still some cases of disruptive conflict between the officers. It was also resolved that the recruitment and training of unit leaders be extremely strict to justify their eventual promotion. Consequently, some unit leaders have been sent out for more advanced training courses in wildlife

Management in East Africa.

A third resolution called for the encouragement of the development and advancement of skills for the village schools. In principle, this has been a most welcome development but some dangers lie ahead. It is likely, for instance, that the contact existing between the village schools and their local community may be weakened if the schools are transformed into government officers.

Finally, many village schools operate from designated wildlife camps and they maintain their traditional links through periodic visits or by interlocking with those people who are employed on part-time basis to work within the camps. In part the success of law enforcement efforts depend on the level of interaction between the villages and the camps. It is therefore important to recognise this factor with regard to future manpower development in the programme.

New Units

Because of its success, ACOMA has attracted more local authorities who would like to upgrade their status into ACOMA units. In many cases, the wildlife department is unable to deal with all the applications in time due to serious manpower and financial constraints. On the other hand, almost a quarter of the country's land surface is now under protection; as one questions the wisdom behind turning traditionally 'open' areas into ACOMA in the face of rising population pressure on the land. In fact most of the units 'in the coming' at present are so

depleted that they constantly, require some form of subsidy. Serious constraints on cash and men will continue to act as a barrier to effective and efficient management of the wildlife estate for a long time to come.

Role of Donors

The Adnako programme has enjoyed the support given to it by many donor agencies and private individuals, in most cases without conditions attached. The W.W.F. US and USAID especially have provided the much needed funds for procurement of capital items e.g. vehicles, grinding mills etc. But most of the donor assistance is earmarked for certain key units in the programme.

CONCLUSION

Although Adnako has its own share of problems, a lot has been achieved so far. The attitudes of the local communities are more favourable, chiefs are regaining some of their past authority and the benefit of employment opportunities. In addition the cost of law enforcement per scout has been reduced.

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